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ABSTRACT

The qualitative inquiry reported here describes the particular sociocultural aspects of an urban elementary school serving as the context for an award-winning reading/language arts early field experience, and takes a close look at how the sociocultural factors of this urban elementary school contribute to the professional development of the preservice teachers and university supervisors who work within that context. Data were collected over 3 years through formal and informal observations, interviews, field notes, informal conversations, and artifacts that included preservice teachers' dialogue journal entries, pre- and post-semester written metaphors about teaching, interpretations of a series of illustrations, and post-semester reflective statements. Analysis demonstrated that the permissive, student-centered philosophy in the school and the negative attitudes of many of the older students contributed to making the field placement a difficult assignment for the white middle class preservice teachers. The experience was positive for the researchers' professional development but not always for the student teachers. The elementary students' behavior caused many to feel they had not accomplished their teaching goals and to equate good teaching with keeping students quiet and on task. The difficulty of the placement also impeded the preservice teachers' development of reflective practices and constructivist views about the learning process. (Contains 37 references.) (JB)

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LESSONS IN THE FIELD: CONTEXT AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANTS IN AN URBAN SCHOOL PLACEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Field experiences are now an integral part of most teacher education programs. But, research that looks at university/K-12 connections generally has excluded descriptions of program characteristics, ignored the specific context in which these initiatives take place, and disregarded their impact on university participants (Carter, 1990; Moore, 1994; Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner, Tabachnick & Densmore, 1987). Consequently, the knowledge base concerning field experiences remains weak and inconclusive (Lanier & Little, 1986).

The qualitative inquiry reported here: 1) describes the particular sociocultural aspects of an urban elementary school serving as the context for an award-winning reading/language arts early field experience and; 2) takes a close look at how the sociocultural factors of this urban elementary school contribute to the professional development of preservice teachers and university supervisors who work within that context.

Theoretical Perspective: A fundamental factor affecting what preservice teachers learn in a field placement may be the school context in which teaching occurs (Gipe, Duffy & Richards, 1989; Richards, Moore & Gipe, 1994). For example, when preservice teachers are placed in K/12 teaching contexts they have opportunities to: 1) become aware of their students' needs (e.g., "These kids are just like kids everywhere who need love and acceptance"); 2) adopt more constructivist views and practices (e.g., "Kids learn best when they can discover and explore"); and 3) develop a good understanding of content-specific knowledge (e.g., "Those word identification lessons worked. The kids are starting to skip unknown words and think about what words might make sense instead of just stopping to sound them out"). On the other hand, the contextual aspects of field placements may influence preservice teachers to: 1) become preoccupied with group management concerns (e.g., "I'm not going to let them say one word out of turn!!"); 2) come to consider students with different values, customs, and language as adversaries (e.g., "I can't understand some of them and some give me trouble"); 3) develop more custodial, impersonal, rigid views about teaching (e.g., "I had to give one boy a warning because he gave me two sentences instead of one"); 4) hold fast to previously-acquired "teacher-as-information-giver" beliefs (e.g., It doesn't work when I let them speak out. Nobody learns anything") and; 5) concentrate solely on survival needs rather than self-reflection (e.g., "I would like to send ten kids to the principal--at least then I could get something done!!").

The contextual characteristics of field placements have the capacity to impact university supervisors' professional development as well.[1] For

[1] For this inquiry, professional development is defined as changes over time in teachers' professional knowledge base, attitudes, beliefs, and practices (Burden, 1986; Kagan, 1993).

example, supervisors in charge of a university/school connection have opportunities to learn about the conditions under which some teachers must teach and some students must learn (Weiner, 1993). Action research projects and fruitful collaboration with seasoned classroom teachers are also possibilities. On the minus side, university supervisors may become frustrated and overextended because: 1) their work in K/12 schools is not supported by university or school system administrators; 2) they must spend considerable time mentoring and soothing anxious preservice teachers before, during, and after class; and 3) they feel isolated and apart from their colleagues and the mainstream of their university. As a result, university supervisors may come to believe that their time spent out in a school setting is not worth the effort expended. Clearly, unless the contextual factors of a "host" school are considered and the impact of those factors on university participants are taken into account, such initiatives may not achieve the more positive outcomes possible. "But we currently know very little about these context-specific effects" (Zeichner, Tabachnick & Densmore, 1987, p. 27). This inquiry, told through the combined "voices" of three university supervisors who also served as participant researchers, supplies explicit information about the sociocultural factors of an urban elementary school and discusses how those contextual aspects impact university participants in both negative and positive ways.

The Inquiry

Methodology: Tenets of qualitative inquiry guided our research. Qualitative methods are especially appropriate when researchers wish to provide "rich, descriptive data about the contexts, activities, and beliefs of participants in educational settings" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 17).

We designed the inquiry using triangulation since "the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point ... [and] designing a study in which multiple cases, multiple informants or more than one data gathering are used can greatly strengthen the study's usefulness for other settings" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 146). We collected data throughout each fall and spring semester for three years. Data sources were formal and informal observations; interviews; field notes; informal conversations; and artifacts -- texts, which themselves are implicated "in the everyday construction of social reality" (Atkinson, 1990, p. 178). The artifacts were preservice teachers' dialogue journal entries; pre- and post-semester written metaphors about teaching; interpretations of a series of seven researcher-devised reading/language arts illustrations that served as a projective technique (e.g., see Harmin & Gregory, 1974 and The Thematic Apperception Test, 1943); and post-semester reflective statements. (Refer to Appendices A through D for examples of these artifacts.)

At the end of each semester we collated all of the data sets for each study participant (i.e., notes documenting observations, interviews, and conversations; dialogue journals; metaphors; interpretations of the reading/language arts illustrations; and final reflective statements). Using constant comparative methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), we then scanned, compared, and cross-checked the aggregated data in order to identify common themes or patterns in our own and the preservice teachers' professional development (Atkinson, 1990; Borko, Lalik & Tomshin, 1987; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In addition, we examined the preservice teachers' dispositions toward reflective thinking and their acquisition of content-specific knowledge (i.e., understanding of current

reading/language arts theories and corresponding instructional practices). In the second stage of analysis we engaged in roundtable discussions focused on our interpretations of the data. Through this interactive process of dialoguing and revisiting the data in an inductive manner, we came to a consensus about recurring themes and patterns.

Program Schedule, Orientation, and Activities

Every Monday and Wednesday morning during the fall and spring semesters, the preservice teachers attend classes at Bayview Elementary School (a pseudonym). For the first hour (8:00 - 9:00 AM), they learn about current theories and practices pertinent to teaching language arts effectively to all students, including linguistically different students. From 9:00 to 10:00 they become teachers, struggling and learning on the-job how to put theory into action and assuming responsibility for implementing reading/language arts strategies in a "real world" situation. At 10:00 they participate in another hour of lectures and seminar discussions. Topics include the reading process, performance-based assessment, and word identification and comprehension strategies.

The program is guided by a constructivist view of learning. For example, discussion sessions with preservice teachers focus on issues such as: 1) how human beings learn best (i.e., when they can explore, discover, reason, and continuously interact with their environment) and 2) the benefits of giving students some responsibility for their own learning (Harste, Short & Burke, 1988; Vygotsky, 1986). The program also emphasizes the importance of teachers reflecting about their work in order to solve educational problems in a thoughtful, deliberate manner (Dewey, 1933; Grossman, 1992). For instance, seminar discussions center on topics such as why all third graders in some school systems must receive reading

instruction from third grade basal readers or who ultimately is responsible if a student receives overly-harsh punishment from a teacher.

Because of our beliefs about the benefits of holistic literacy instruction, a literature-based curriculum guides our work with the elementary students. Typical instructional sessions include elementary students and their preservice teachers: 1) reading, talking, and writing about literature selections; 2) planning, writing, or editing stories; 3) corresponding in dialogue journals with one another; 4) interacting in visual and performing arts activities; 5) participating in literacy learning games created by the preservice teachers; and 6) engaging in reading comprehension and writing strategies.[2]

The Elementary School Context: We selected Bayview Elementary School, as the context for our program because of its idealistic, permissive, student-centered philosophy, urban setting, and culturally diverse, academically at-risk student population. We wanted a teaching context that would introduce the preservice teachers to a view of schools different from their own experiences. In all likelihood, future "teachers who are white or middle class will probably not teach students like themselves" (Grant, cited in Weiner, 1993, p. 110). Therefore, we wanted to prepare our preservice teachers for possible future employment. In this context, we also hoped to be able to challenge their beliefs and previously-acquired conceptions about teaching and help them recognize and perhaps broaden their perspectives. Studies suggest that when preservice teachers are confronted with teaching practices, values, and beliefs which "differ from their own...[they are] more likely to examine

[2] In June, 1991, this program was awarded the American Association of Higher Education's Presidents' Award for "Exemplary Work in Accelerating Minority Students' Achievements."

and reconstruct their own beliefs" (Kagan, 1992, p. 157). Another consideration was the receptiveness of the teachers and principal, Dr. Rob (a pseudonym). Further, unlike the prevailing climate in many urban schools, Dr. Rob and his teachers work to make their school a democratic community by "withstanding institutional pressures for uniform instruction and custodial treatment of students" (Weiner, 1993, p. 121). Therefore, at Bayview we knew that we would feel comfortable and have the freedom to structure our program as we wished.

The school is located in a very old, red brick, non-air conditioned building. In the spring and fall, temperatures in individual classrooms may reach over 100 degrees. Recently, the School Board decided to close Bayview because of safety hazards. For example, the roof leaked considerably, and portions of the ceiling occasionally fell, narrowly missing students. For reasons unknown to us, the school remained open and some minor repairs have now been accomplished. However, the halls and classrooms are dark and dingy; electric light bulbs hang suspended from frayed cords; window shades are torn or missing; and the walls are cracked and peeling. Apparently, the School Board does not consider Bayview when allocating money for structural and aesthetic city-wide school improvements.

There is a permissive atmosphere at Bayview School. Students address teachers by their first names,and it is common for students to walk out of their classrooms without asking permission in order to use the bathroom or water fountain or to speak to Dr. Rob concerning their problems with teachers and peers. Students are encouraged to interact and verbalize with one another whenever they wish. Consequently, the noise level throughout the school is extremely high. There is no dress code. Some teachers wear cut-off jeans and t-shirts, and students dress as they

choose.

Bayview is not a large school. There are twelve teachers; one section of each grade level for kindergarten through grade five, and two sections of each grade level for grades six through eight. Class sizes vary from twenty in kindergarten to thirty in each of the seventh and eighth grades.

The Elementary Students: Of the approximately three hundred and fifty students at Bayview, eighty percent are African-American; sixteen percent Caucasian; and four percent Hispanic American. Many receive government subsidized breakfast and lunch and live in nearby low income housing. Little parental support is offered to the majority of the students.

The younger students at Bayview particularly enjoy our program. They work in small groups of approximately ten to twelve students with our preservice teachers, and they relish the extra attention and the holistic, literature-based lessons. However, because of underlying familial and environmental problems, a few students exhibit developmentally inappropriate social conduct, such as biting others when angry; hitting and yelling to alleviate frustrations and to get their own way; and playing and running through classrooms, hallways, and the basement during instructional sessions.

The majority of students in the upper grades are overage because of on-going academic problems throughout their school careers. Some were "dropouts" for a year or more prior to attending Bayview. "Unable to achieve in school, these ... [students] ... see academic success as unattainable and so they protect themselves by deciding school is

unimportant" (Comer, 1988, p. 6). Not surprisingly, the majority of these students also consider school attendance irrelevant. Unfortunately, verbal disruptions among the students occur often, and each semester one or two students are suspended or expelled for aggressive behavior, carrying concealed weapons, or selling or using drugs.

Because of boredom with school routine, the older students bring a laizzez-faire attitude with them as they work with the preservice teachers. Consequently, many are uncooperative and participate minimally in literacy lessons. Low self-esteem, a sense of inadequacy, inner conflicts, peer pressures, and chronic anger also cause some students to deliberately try to offend the preservice teachers (e.g., "I do not like white people!"). Yet, as the semester continues, many of these same students volunteer to carry the preservice teachers' books and teaching supplies to their cars. At the end of each semester some students also express regret that the preservice teachers have completed their work at Bayview.

Most of the students are in need of rich literacy experiences. Data collected over the past three years indicate that they have become more motivated to read and write. They also write more and take more risks with their writing. However, the students' oral and written language and reading abilities continue to be under-developed for their ages and grade levels.

The Elementary Teachers: Almost half of the teachers at Bayview are recent liberal arts graduates. They are members of a special teaching corps (Teach for America) who volunteer to work for two years in schools

throughout the United States as they complete courses toward certification. Other teachers have been at Bayview for over fifteen years.

Dr. Rob encourages his teachers to design their own curriculum and to teach lessons as they think best. Their individual instructional orientations range from a skills-based "teacher-as-information-giver" focus to a holistic, constructivist "teacher as facilitator" view. Because of Dr. Rob's strongly articulated, idealistic, and "free" student-centered philosophy and the prevailing values of the school, new teachers quickly adopt permissive attitudes toward their students. It is also possible that most of these new teachers enter "teaching to change education - and - society. [Therefore] they [have] a considerable investment in making sure [that] their classrooms [are] democratic or free" (Weiner, 1993, p. 119).

The classroom teachers are supportive of our program. They welcome the preservice teacher wholeheartedly and look forward to having them work with their students. However, despite our efforts as supervisors to involve the classroom teachers in program planning and implementation, they remain minimally involved. Very few adopt any of the lessons they observe. The teachers are very busy and there is little opportunity for them to begin to understand the literacy theories which undergird our program and the preservice teachers' practices.

The Impact of Bayview's Sociocultural Factors on University Participants

Preservice Teachers: Most preservice teachers enter our program with feelings of apprehension and anxiety. Their dialogue journals reflect their

fears and lack of self-confidence.[3] For example, John writes: "January 31st...Nothing in the world could have prepared me for what I saw today; I am unprepared. They are trying to give me a hard time." Sally's journal mirrors similar concerns: "January 31st...Somehow I am afraid. I am very vulnerable. I woke up every hour on the hour all night. This school is all run down. Couldn't you find a better school?" The preservice teachers' concerns are legitimate. Like most elementary education majors, the majority "are white, middle-class, and female" (McDiarmid, 1990, p. 12); few have worked with groups of students prior to this experience; most have never closely interacted with African-Americans.

After their initial sessions at Bayview the preservice teachers' frustrations and feelings of estrangement rise. Typical journal entries include, "What am I supposed to do with these kids?"; "Why don't you tell us what to do?"; "We need more time on campus"; "You are just throwing things at us"; and "Many of the students could not understand the words I was saying in the spelling test even though I spoke slowly and distinctly."

The preservice teachers do settle in over time and become more aware of their students' needs (e.g., "These kids aren't as bad as I thought. In fact, they're just like kids everywhere who need love and acceptance"). However, as described in the literature (e.g., See McNeely & Mertz, 1990; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990), many preservice teachers become preoccupied with group management concerns (e.g., "Next week I'm going to try a behavior management chart. I'm not going to let them say one word out of turn!"). Others come to view their students as adversaries (e.g., "It was a good day. All the kids behaved and Nicky, the one who gives me the most

[3] The preservice teachers whose journal excerpts appear in this manuscript have graciously given permission for their writing to be shared. The names of preservice teachers and elementary students are pseudonyms.

trouble, was absent. Thank God!" and "These kids have no respect for us. One of my students walked in Monday and called me a dog. You can't work with kids like that! I never talked to my teachers that way!").

Most of the preservice teachers enter our program believing that good teaching is the transmission of knowledge (McDiarmid, 1990). As the semester progresses, only a few adopt more constructivist perspectives. Some studies show that school placement or program philosophy do not affect preservice teachers' prior beliefs (Lortie, 1975; McDiarmid, 1990, cited in Kagan, 1992). But, according to Feiman-Nemser and Buchman (1987), we may not be doing enough to urge the preservice teachers to examine their previously-acquired beliefs about teaching and learning. On the other hand, the teaching placement is difficult. Despite the constructivist emphasis in our program and our own constructivist practices, we know that the preservice teachers have little time to consider alternative philosophies of teaching.

Our program is designed to promote reflective thinking. Therefore, we urge the preservice teachers to think carefully about their work (e.g., "Reflect! Reflect! Tell me why you think things went so well"). We also articulate our own reflective orientations and try to operate as reflective practitioners. Yet, we know that most preservice teachers enter and exit our program displaying minimal or nonexistent reflective tendencies. A few preservice teachers are "natural born" reflectors (e.g., "I've always reflected since I was a little girl. I ask myself 'why' about everything. I LOVE this!"). But, many confuse thinking reflectively with stating procedural facts about their lessons (e.g., "MY REFLECTIONS! I put the kids in a circle. I handed out the papers. Things went okay. That's about it"). Perhaps we expect too much. As one preservice teacher explained to us,

"We do reflect. But, we're just learning this stuff. It takes awhile for it to sink in." It also is understandable that the contextual factors of the field placement may influence the preservice teachers to consider their own survival needs first rather than their students' needs (Fuller, 1969; Richards & Gipe, 1988).

On a more positive note, the preservice teachers' work with the elementary students and their responses to the illustrated reading/language arts vignettes show that over the course of the semester they gradually construct a good understanding of effective literacy instructional practices. Most of the preservice teachers also develop confidence about their abilities to teach multicultural, urban students who are academically at-risk (e.g., "I now know more than any outsider would ever believe. This has changed me forever;" and "When I registered for these classes I had no idea what I was doing. I felt like someone had put me in a blender and pressed the puree button. But, it has gotten easier. I now know that I can handle anything. It does not matter where I will work").

The University Supervisors: We concur with Weiner (1993) that as supervisors of a university/urban field program our job is labor intensive. We spend considerable time solving problems; teaching demonstration lessons; meeting with classroom teachers; traveling to and from the elementary school; and observing, mentoring, and soothing preservice teachers. While the time given to these activities may not be "valued in the reward structure of...[teacher education] institutions" (Tafel & Christensen, 1988, p. 4), we have benefitted a great deal from this experience. We continue to maintain energy as program supervisors, and

we remain committed to the program. We have close contact with practicing teachers and their students. We know the values and customs of an urban school and understand under what conditions some teachers must teach and some students must learn. Working together at Bayview School has given us many opportunities to collaborate with one another and to forge close collegial, professional, and personal relationships as well.

We present research findings from our studies conducted at Bayview School at national and international conferences and publish reports in scholarly journals. Our research efforts allow us to "give voice to the otherwise silenced voices of [urban classroom teachers and] students" (Weiner, 1993, p. 133). In addition, supervising this initiative forces us to examine our own orientations. We adjust course content and assignments to align our practices with our views, and we continually reflect about our work in order to ensure that we "practice what we preach."

Because our program is literature-based we also have become more knowledgeable about quality multicultural children's literature. Further, working in a literature-based program motivates us to create reading comprehension and writing strategies compatible with holistic literacy instruction and the elementary students' instructional needs. Most importantly, supervising preservice teachers in a multicultural urban setting helps us to know "well the dilemmas of both teacher education and the joys and difficulties of daily teaching" (Cuban, 1993, p. x).

Final Reflections: Engaging in this inquiry has enabled us to address the contextual realities of our program. We cannot deny that Bayview

Elementary School's permissive, student-centered philosophy, and the negative attitudes of many of the older students contribute to making this field placement a difficult assignment for our white and middle class preservice teachers. Their dialogue journal statements, informal conversations, and final reflective statements attest to their anxieties, fears, and frustrations. However, we know that "urban teachers of at-risk students require special preparation" (Weiner, 1993, p. 7). We believe that working in an urban elementary school with multicultural students who are academically at-risk prepares our preservice teachers for the realities of their future employment conditions.

At the same time, we recognize that we need to work toward making this field placement less difficult and demanding for our preservice teachers. Toward that end we are considering implementing activities such as presenting reality-based case studies, demonstration lessons, and role playing simulations, plus encouraging observations at the school site prior to each semester's field experience. These activities will provide our preservice teachers with some background knowledge about Bayview School's values, philosophy, and student population and give the preservice teachers a repertoire of strategies for soothing group conflicts and mediating disputes among students. We also are considering restructuring the program so that the preservice teachers work with fewer students. In this way the preservice teachers will "become familiar and comfortable with individual students so that students become real people rather than categories" (Weiner, 1993, pp. 118-119).

As supervisors of a university/urban elementary school initiative we have discovered that collaboration has a synergistic power. We become energized as we work together solving logistical problems and crises

associated with the field program. We are learners along with our preservice teachers. We have insider knowledge of an urban elementary school (Cuban, 1993). And, we remain committed to the program.

In the final analysis we conclude that working in Bayview Elementary School as university supervisors has had a profoundly positive impact on our professional development. The same is not always true for our preservice teachers. At times, the elementary students' behavior influences many of our preservice teachers to believe that they have not accomplished their teaching goals (e.g., "I cannot shake this feeling of failure"). Many of the students' negative attitudes and inappropriate behavior also influence the preservice teachers to attempt to counteract the permissive attitude of the school by equating good teaching with keeping students quiet and on task (e.g., "Smaller groups are easier to manage, and I just shiver at what it would be like trying to teach these students as a whole class"). It is also understandable that the difficulty of the field placement impedes the preservice teachers' development of reflective practices and constructivist views about the learning process. However, we know that by the end of the semester, they learn a considerable amount about teaching effective literacy lessons, and they feel comfortable teaching multicultural students in an urban school. We also recognize that placing our preservice teachers in an urban school environment is a necessity. "First-hand experience and theoretical knowledge about urban schools are essential for virtually all [preservice] teachers who will work with poor, minority students in urban schools" (Weiner, 1993, p. 129).

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APPENDIX A

Example of a Preservice Teacher's Dialogue Journal

January 31

Nothing in the world could have prepared me for what I saw today. I've never been in a class that is so disorganized and uncontrollable in my life. I realize it is only the first day and it should get better. We administered the vocabulary test first and most of the students seemed unmotivated to do this test at first. Many of them did not have the pens or pencils to even complete the test. Some of them had to use crayons. I was unprepared for this dilemma. After this we attempted to do the spelling test. I passed out a sheet of paper to everyone in class. I gave the instructions and we administered the spelling test. I was surprised that many of the students could not understand the words I was saying, even though I spoke slowly and distinctly. They obviously had a problem understanding white English vernacular or they were trying to give me a hard time. Finally we handed out the personal journals. In all I had a good positive, and enthusiastic attitude from the students.

February 2

We handed out the journals first today. Already the students seemed less enthusiastic about writing in their journal. I can't seem to find anything to motivate these children. Many of the students go to art and special classes; I feel I really can't hold them back from this. I need to find some other way to motivate them. After the journals, we worked on the name tags. Some of the students work diligently toward making their name tags, but most were once again unmotivated to do anything but talk. I handed out 28 gold medal name tags (made from yellow construction paper) and got back only around 18. Ten of these got "lost in the shuffle."

February 7

Today Beth administered the interest inventory. This was only half as successful as it should have been. The students seemed interested in doing the activity, but they were also interested in doing other things at the same time--like talking. I've realized that the students like to answer questions. Now I have to find the right questions to ask. The interest inventory consisted of questions on cards that each student must answer individually. This did not work. So what we did was ask the questions orally and had the students write individual answers down. I got a lot of responses just by walking around and listening to group discussions.

February 9

We introduced the reading response logs today. Barely half of the students responded, if that much. They listened to the story and probably enjoyed it, but when it comes to do writing lessons of any sort whether it's in their journals or doing interest inventories or just a reading response log, they did not seem motivated in any way. We talked about how they grade kids in class today. All these kids see is whether something is for a grade. If it's not it doesn't affect them. They have no motivation to do good in their evaluations at the end of the year turn out.

They have no respect for us. They know that our work matters only to us and to you.

February 21

I read a story to them today. I chose a story from an Encyclopedia Brown Book. I read to them "The Case of the Ticking Clock." I really did this to see what kind of listening skills they had -- whether they would listen to the story and then possibly, using listening comprehension, solve the story. We took important facts out of the story and then evaluated them to come to a conclusion. This worked with the students; the ones that were interested. I tried to get them to do a reading response log on this story, but it seemed more successful just talking about the story rather than having them write about it.

February 28

Beth taught a lesson on "Kubla Kahn." Many of the students weren't paying attention, even though they were given a copy of the poem. The students had no desire to learn about this poem, much less the desire to write a reading response log about it. I am becoming more and more aggravated with these students everyday. It seems that I'm not able to do hardly anything with these kids. I can't connect with them.

March 2

Today we split up the class and I took my kids outside. That was a big mistake. Four of them hit the gate. I finally got most of them corralled. I had to send one of them up to the office, because he wouldn't behave. I would like to send ten of them up there at least then I would be able to get something done. The lesson went well though, after I got them settled. It was kind of ununiform but I think the kids enjoyed it and learned something.

March 7

Today Beth taught a lesson. I moderated the class. I can tell Beth is losing patience with the students. I don't blame her. It seems every time I write in my log it's complaining about my students. I hardly ever have something good to say about them. Well anyway some of the students completed the story frame. A couple of the students who I least expected to finish, did. I was quite surprised at the participation. After the students wrote in their journal I discussed ideas for the mural. They seemed to like the idea of having a gold medal for the mural.

March 9

We started the mural today. All the students were enthusiastic about completing the mural. I had lots of participation. Everyone was given a blank piece of paper and told to draw a picture pertaining to the Olympics (our classroom theme). I was once again surprised at the participation rate, but was quite disappointed at the end product of some pictures. Some of the pictures had no correlation to the Olympics.

March 14

We were busy finishing up the mural today. Everyone was quite helpful. The students were busy cutting, pasting, sticking on stickers, and drawing more pictures. At times the class got a little hectic because the students got off task. I tried to keep them all on task but that is not always possible. The students were overly proud of the mural they had created.

March 15

Today went fifty percent good, fifty percent bad. Everyone was quiet and on task. Too bad, half of the class was on task playing cards. I tried to get them to put away the cards but they wouldn't. Joan, the teacher, had a talk with them and they continued to play so I assumed that she kind of condoned it or it was a reward for something I did not know about. I let it go. The rest of the class and I had a group conversation on the opening scene in the movie "Menace to Society." It pertained to racism and protection of property. I think the discussion opened some eyes and hopefully changed some of the students attitudes toward interpretation of racism.

March 21

Today we went into the cafeteria, and started on ideas for our books. The students had some good ideas about stories. Some had trouble thinking of stories, so I thought I would bring my guitar in and try a lesson out with them.

March 23

Today we sang the blues. The students were having trouble thinking of stories and ideas. They wouldn't work because they had "writers block." So I pulled out my guitar and we sang the blues. This was to show them that they could easily think of a story off the top of their head. I provided the riff, they provided the lyrics and story. It worked well.

April 4

Today I tried to get the students to finish their books. All I got was broken promises. I'm working on it. I'm gonna do it. When it was all said and done, I had all the work from only one student.

April 6

It was totally impossible to get the students to work downstairs so instead of giving even more time for their books, I decided to do a word map. The word map was fine. I really got the students interested. It didn't turn out well but I got the job done. The class was quite interested and then right when you (Dr. Richards) walked up, they went nuts. I mean really psycho. They were running around. They were hitting on each other. I was really embarrassed.

April 11

I decided to do my data this week. It started out very poorly, but I implemented a very "neat" discipline procedure. I had two peoples names on a referral and if anyone else's name was to go on the referral all three would be sent up to the office. Well this worked great. It kept everybody in the group disciplining and controlling each other and it kept the stragglers from other classes away. I was proud of the lesson and the discipline strategy.

April 13

Today we finished the data by discussing drug and alcohol abuse and their consequences. Also I got the students to do some writing work. They write sequels to the story/song I read to them. I can't believe it.

April 18

I was sick today. Sorry!!!

April 20

Today I did oral retelling taping of the story "Jumanji." I could tell many of the students didn't pay attention, but the last girl, Shondora, was outstanding. You would have sworn that she was reading a summation off a page somewhere. I was so surprised. Today Leslie got bitten by a student and I was in the office when she came in. She was crying hysterically. This upset me. I asked her what was wrong and if I could do anything, she just ignored me. This upset me more. She's obviously still mad at me. Oh well.

April 25

Today we did oral retelling with the book "Nettie's Trip South." The students were not paying attention; I could tell. I even warned the students that I knew would be retelling the story to pay attention. They didn't. After Pete and Andy told me that the students said they couldn't retell the story because they couldn't hear the story. If they would have shut their mouths they could have heard the story.

April 27

Today the students did the sustained silent reading of the the book "Wagon Wheels." Many of the students were insulted at the reading level they were ask to read. I told them since this book was so easy they shouldn't have any problems with it. They still were uninterested.

May 2

We didn't get anything done today because the students were restless in their anticipation for their fieldtrip to the Superdome. We had a lot of flaring tempers between the students and between the students and teachers, because many students were upset that they had not brought in their permission slips. Joan said that there was no use in trying to get anything done because of the fieldtrip, but Beth got a small lesson done with some of the students.

May 4

Beth suggest a small party and maybe a video for the students. After Monday I really wouldn't give them anything. They really don't deserve it, but why make the good ones suffer for the bad. So, I sucked up my views and agreed on it. After all they are just kids and it's better that they are here than out on the streets.

P.S. April 29

As suggested by you, (Dr. Richards) and my fellow classmates, I took off of work today to come to Bayview School. I took four of my students down to the library to work on their books. I got all the work done for all four students, even though I still had to constantly ride one of them to get her work done. I think you'll be proud of how the books turned out. That's the news and I am outta here.

APPENDIX B

Examples of Preservice Teachers' Pre- and Post-Semester Metaphors about Teaching

Stephanie's Pre-Semester Metaphor

The Coach Approach
The teaching and learning process can be considered as coaching a team. The teacher is the head coach, and the students make up the team (along with the coach). As in coaching, the teacher explains, demonstrates, and put into practice the skills that are to be learned. However, the coach does take into consideration the individuals potential. The coach expects the student to perform to their own potential. This in turn, makes the team up as a whole. The students as a whole make up the learning team. The teacher guides the students like a coach would and as the students practice the skills, they master the skill by working as a team. By helping each other they all become winners!

Stephanie's Post Semester Metaphor

No Strikes Out!
Teaching is like a baseball team cooperating and the whole team, including the coach, giving it their all. The teacher is just that, a coach, giving it more than 100%. The coach is also a friend with high standards for herself and the team. In order to make it to the World Series they all, as a team, have to work together, cooperate , and respect one another.

Leslie's Pre-Semester Metaphor

I see a teacher's role as being that of a facilitator. The metaphor that comes to mind is one of a salesman. You are selling a product (an education) to a prospective buyer (the student). In order for the buyer to want the product, the seller has to make it exciting and viable. The seller cannot get bogged down using technical terms or the buyer will quickly lose interest. The buyer needs to try out the product and use it according to his or her need. The use can be refined later on as needs dictate. A buyer has many different needs and it is up to the seller to fill these needs
Post Semester Metaphorical Orientation: Teacher Directed/Curriculum as a Commodity

Leslie's Post-Semester Metaphor

The Car Salesman
The car salesman is me, the teacher, while the customers are my students. The salesman has to be prepared and have extensive knowledge of his inventory, to inform the customer. He also has to listen to the customer in order to find out what he or she needs. The salesman has to be enthusiastic and motivating when making a sales pitch to get the customer's interest. The salesman has to have a fair pricing scheme so the customer won't feel ripped off. The pricing scheme fits in with the grading scale and whether a student feels it is fair. If a sale is made, the salesman/teacher has been successful with this sales pitch and the customer/student is completely satisfied.

Elizabeth's Pre-Semester Metaphor

The Canoe Trip Approach
Teaching is like taking a canoe trip. The principal takes you upstream and lets the teacher canoe, and her children, the canoers off. The canoers and canoe are sent down stream to continue on their adventure. Sometimes the trip is easy and the current brings you downstream like when the children may catch on to what is being taught. Sometimes when the river is high the canoers have to paddle long and hard like when the children have a hard time catching on to a lesson. The river may even be so rough in spots that the canoers flip over in their canoes. Troubled kids need to be pulled out of the water, their canoes bailed out, and again sent on their way. When the canoe trip is over, the children will be so excited that they will be ready for another adventure. Some will get used to falling in the water, but they'll learn not to panic and to finally pull themselves out.

Elizabeth's Post-Semester Metaphor

I think teaching is more like white river rafting than just a canoe trip. The principal brings us up river and helps us (the students and I) get our boat in the water. As a teacher, I sit in the back and watch over the riders (the students) The water is rough in spots and I give directions as I see they are needed. The students take turns guiding the boat. If a rider falls overboard, I'll fish them out and set them going again. If one of my students if failing, I'll do my best to make sure I push the student to do their best and pass. When the water is smooth, the riders are able to navigate to places of their choice. I keep them on the main route, but I'll let them explore.

White river rafting is a faster pace than canoeing. Like teaching is exciting, sometimes its slow and sometimes it goes by so quick. Once you get started there is no getting off. The river is also everchanging as the water breaks down and builds up rocks. Teachers have to be ever changing. They have to keep abreast of the new information-get rid of extra baggage.

APPENDIX C

Examples of the Researcher-Devised Reading/Language Arts Illustrations

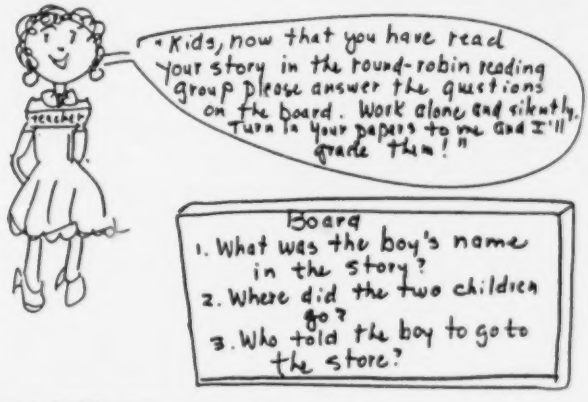
Dear Students, #2

Please respond fully to this illustrated vignette. What do you think?

Hi students. Our theme will be about dinosaurs. Open your nonfiction book and read the first chapter about dinosaurs.
teacher
"What's a dinosaur?"
"I already learned about dinosaurs."
Student #1
Student #2

Dear Students, #6

Please respond fully to this illustrated vignette. Describe what is going on. Thanks!


"Kids, now that you have read your story in the round-robin reading group please answer the questions on the board. Work alone and silently. Turn in your papers to me and I'll grade them!"
teacher
Board
1. What was the boy's name in the story?
2. Where did the two children go?
3. Who told the boy to go to the store?

Story

Once there was a boy named Jack. Jack's mother told him to go to the store. So... Jack and his friend Tom went to the store. The two boys were good children

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APPENDIX D

Example of a Preservice Teacher's Post-Semester Reflective Statement

Overall I would say my entire time at Bayview School was successful in helping me to grow professionally. I did not enjoy many of the times that I had to teach, but I am grateful for the experience that they have given me. It would not be an understatement if I had problems with the group of students that I had to teach. The reasons for this are many and are discussed throughout the rest of this reflection.

In the area of literacy instruction I feel more confidant about my ability to go out and teach this subject. I do not claim to be all-knowing in this subject area, for this is my first time in taking instruction. Being all-knowing is not important, what is important is that I now have an idea of what literacy instruction is about and also where to look for ideas for lessons. As to my earlier beliefs about literacy instruction, I do not think that I had many other than that I wished to try to instill in my prospective students the love that I myself have for reading and that I thought that basal texts were an easy way out for a lazy teacher. I still feel that reading is essential to life as food, water, and air. One of the new or changed ideas I have from attending this block is that I now see that the basal texts are what you make of them. I see that they are very comprehensive, and that they can be an integral beginning to any curricula. I have also seen many good strategies that I had never seen when I was a student. Things like Reader's Theater and language experience stories let me see that literacy instruction do not have to be just boring drills or mundane activities, but can teach as well as be fun.

I think that my ideas about how children learn are unchanged. This does not seem to me to be a problem, either in the course or me. I think that over the past year or so that I have begun to really solidify my viewpoint in this area. This viewpoint is that children learn in many different ways. Truly an earth shaking statement this is not, but I truly believe in what it means. In teaching (and also coincidentally in disciplining), I think that a teacher is doing his or her student an injustice if they try to use one method in teaching. I feel that this view is what the literacy block tries to teach my peers and me. This view is further seen in the various activities that we were taught in this class as well. Teaching strategies like language experience stories or open word sorts, two very different activities, allow for the individual performance of every student involved. These ideas show that my beliefs in how children learn are strengthened, not changed because of this class.

My group management skills were tested severely by this teaching experience. To say that I had no control at times over some of my students is a mild claim. I would like to save most of the discussion about this for the next part of the reflection, but I do know one area I learned

something. Being a special education major means I have to take behavior management classes, but those did not help me with this class very much (for many reasons, see below). I did learn one thing, sometimes it is good to split a group down into smaller parts even though it may mean more work. Smaller groups are definitely easier to manage and I just shiver at what it would have been like trying to teach these students as a whole class. I do not want you to believe that I think that when I get in the real world I will be able to always have a smaller group. In this situation it was a major and welcomed aid in dealing with these students.

I would say that the greatest area of success was in my own personal growth as not only a person, but as a teacher. I now know that I could teach in an upper elementary environment and not lose my sanity and be committed, or worse, because of the experience. I never thought I would be able to handle that type of environment, but I now know I have both the patience and ability to cope and teach in this type of situation. This is an incredible growth for me and what is so amazing about it all is it stems from some of my most negative experiences at Bayview School. My students were at time unruly and that was on a good day. I now have reflected over all of my experiences and I know there were many factors that led to this negativity. As you already know the teacher is having her own problems with discipline in her class, and has changed plans often. On top of this I enter the picture, teaching for just one hour twice a week, and never ever having had a previous experience in dealing with such discipline problems before. Over the course of the whole experience, I have had both good experiences in teaching as well as totally negative ones. I even think that the totally free nature of the school, especially the third floor, contributes to the problems I, as well as the teacher, had with the students. But still I see success in it all. Where I once thought I could only work with and have patience to deal with small kids, I now know I can deal with bigger ones. I used to joke that I would probably go totally crazy if I had to deal with older kids, but I see that that was a useless exaggeration and a totally inaccurate belief I held about myself.

I am truly grateful for the experience at Bayview School, but I still feel regret. I truly wish I was able to have more success in my teaching experiences with these children. I feel as if I have failed my profession. I know that many of the things that happened were beyond my control, but still I feel regretful. I know I can teach. Some of my lessons at Bayview went well and that was an incredible feeling, but I cannot shake this feeling of failure. At times over the experience I ranged from elation over a good day to feeling like a failure to outright hatred for many of the students. I do not like that last emotion, but I realize that I am only human and can only take so much. Success is that I was patient, understanding, and able to cope with those emotions. I will always feel as if I failed because I could not reach all of my students, but realistically I know that I may never reach every student I teach. I know that I have grown as a person and I did have some successful lessons. I know that I got through this with success because of my own abilities, the help of my peers, and the guidance and encouraging words of my teachers. I pity those who cannot go through this experience.